

Rail Background Information

- **Harvest** – Predominantly clapper rails (85%), some sora (14%), small number of Virginia and King rails taken. Clappers are mostly local VA birds, some are migrants from NJ, NY, other salt marsh areas.
- **Nesting** - Clapper rails start nesting in early May and continue throughout June, with re-nesting in July/August. Late nesting rails may have broods that do not reach flight stage until late August or early September. This occurs in years when 1st nests are flooded by spring storms/tides and re-nests contribute significantly to production. Therefore, we generally wait until the second week of September to open the rail hunting season.
- **2008 Production** Weather thus far this year (April to June) has been fair for rail production. Several “northeast” storm have caused moderate tidal flooding and destroyed some rail nests. Rails generally have a strong re-nesting effort and if that proves successful this year, rails could still have fair to average production.
- The key to setting the season is to bracket the greatest number of high tides possible. The season dates may change from year to year because of the tide schedule.

Past Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 70 days)</u>		<u>Hunters</u>	<u>Harvest*</u>
2007	Sept. 10 – Nov. 17		300	4,400
2006	Sept. 8 – Nov. 16		300	4,000
2005	Sept. 12 – Nov. 19		765	2,500
2004	Sept. 13 – Nov. 20		700	4,300
2003	Sept. 10 – Nov. 18		500	1,300
2002	Sept. 9 - Nov. 16		603	5,300
2001	Sept. 11 – Nov. 19		631	5,600
2000	Sept. 13 – Oct. 2	Oct. 11 – Nov. 29	541	1,800
1999	Sept. 10 – Oct. 12	Oct. 22 – Nov. 27	683	2,600
1998	Sept. 9 – Oct. 24	Nov. 2 – Nov. 25		
1997	Sept. 15 - 27	Oct. 8 - Dec. 3		
1996	Sept. 16 – Oct. 17	Oct. 24 - Nov. 30		
1995	Sept. 11 – Oct. 14	Oct. 21 – Nov.25		
1994	Sept. 12 – Nov. 20			
1993	Sept. 11 – Nov. 19			
1992	Sept. 19 – Nov. 27			
1991	Sept. 2 - Nov. 9			
1990	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9			

*Hunter and Harvest estimates available from HIP for the period 1999–2007. The 1990-98 average (hunter and harvest estimates) derived from Federal Duck stamp survey: Sora – (150, 1250), Clapper – (420, 7,600).